

As we observe the 50th anniversary of World War II, we must also pause to remember and to pay tribute to those who did not come home, to honor them for the ultimate sacrifice, to honor their families, their friends, those who love them. Also, we must honor those who are here and those they represent who did come home after service in World War II and all those who have guarded our security since. Our Nation is in your debt. We will never forget your valor, your sacrifices, the daily lives that you have made possible.

Let me say, too, a special word of appreciation to those of you who came through the line today who told me that you, too, were going back to Europe this week to be part of that celebration. I hope when you go back, you will feel the immense pride and gratitude that all Americans feel for the sacrifice you made, the commitment you made, and for all the days

you made possible in the 50 years since. And I hope everyone else who is here being honored today will also share in some of that pride. We sometimes forget that no democracy in human history has ever lasted as long as the United States of America. It is easy to forget that. It is easy to forget it, but if you measure against all the recorded history of civilization, every day we have is a miracle, a miracle that you made possible, and we thank you for it.

I'm going to sign the proclamations, and then Mr. Gober and Mr. Runyon are in charge of the rest of the program.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Hershel Gober. The proclamations are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Memorial Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia *May 30, 1994*

Thank you very much, Mrs. McIntosh, for your fine introduction and for your service to our Nation in Asia during the Second World War. To you and your husband, Professor Shriner, who sang so well—I could imagine him at the age of 24 singing again; to Katy Daley; all the others here; and General Gordon; the distinguished leaders of our Armed Forces, the Congress, and the administration; to the leaders of the veterans' organizations present here; to all of you who are veterans and your families; my fellow Americans.

This morning we join, as we always do on this day, to honor the sacrifices that have made our Nation free and strong. All across our Nation, small towns are holding quiet Memorial Day ceremonies. Proud veterans are pinning on their medals. Children are laying wreaths. Men and women in uniform everywhere stand a little bit taller today as they salute the colors.

Here at Arlington, row after row of headstones, aligned in silent formation, reminds us of the high cost of our freedom. Almost a quarter of a million Americans rest here alone, from every war since the Revolution. Among them are many names we know: General Per-

shing, Audie Murphy, General Marshall, and so many others. But far more numerous are the Americans whose names are not famous, whose lives were not legend but whose deeds were the backbone that secured our Nation's liberty. Today we honor them. We honor them all as heroes, those who are buried here and those who are buried all around the Nation and the world.

If you look at the headstones, they don't tell you whether the people buried there are poor or rich. They make no distinction of race or of age or of condition. They simply stand, each of them, for one American. Each reminds us that we are descendants, whatever our differences, of a common creed, unbeatable when we are united: one nation under God.

Fifty years ago, the world learned just what Americans are capable of when we joined in common cause in World War II. Later this week it will be my great honor to represent our Nation in Europe at the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the World War II campaigns at Normandy and in Italy.

World War II was an era of sacrifice unequalled in our own history. Over 400,000

Americans died in the service of our Nation. At D-Day alone, over 5,200 were killed or wounded in Normandy. But the battle that was fought there was not just between two armies; it was, as clearly as any conflict in all of human history, a battle between two ways of life.

The totalitarians whose tanks had overrun so much of the earth honestly believed democracies were too undisciplined to survive. Hitler believed a free people would never muster the unity of purpose to win the Second World War. But in the chaos of battle, it was the independence and the can-do confidence of the sons and daughters of America and the other democracies that won the day. And all across our Nation, in factories and farms and hospitals and blood banks, it was the energies of free people who turned the tide. General Eisenhower called it then "the fury of an aroused democracy," the self-reliant fury that took Omaha Beach and liberated much of the Continent and, within a year, brought the war in Europe to an end.

Today, too many of our youngest Americans know too little about what the heroes of that war did. The children and grandchildren of that generation have not been taught enough about the meaning of Normandy or Anzio or Guadalcanal or Midway. And that's why the commemorative ceremonies this year are so very important to all of us: To honor, we must remember.

Today somewhere in America, a curious child rummaging through an attic will stumble upon his grandfather's insignia patches, a pocket guide to France, a metal cricket, a black-and-white photo of a smiling young man in uniform. But learning about those times and those deeds must be more than accidental.

Fortunately, many of our fellow Americans understand that. Gail Thomas of Brentwood, Missouri, was one of them. Her parents both served in World War II. She's a librarian at the Mark Twain Elementary School in her community, and every year she brings in veterans of D-Day and other battles to speak to the students. She says the kids can't believe what those gray-haired men did when they were young. Then they understand that America is the way it is today because of what people gave up 50 years ago. That is the lesson we must all remember, not only for the veterans of World War II but for all our veterans on Memorial Day, on Veterans Day, and every day.

The American veterans of World War II, though they fought in a terribly destructive con-

flict, at heart were builders. When they came home, they laid down the ribbons of interstate highways across this land. And through the GI bill, those who had fought and won the war were educated so they could win the fruits of victory in peaceful cooperation. In countries ravaged by war, they helped to lift cities from rubble to renewal. They created the international institutions that have undergirded our security for a half a century.

Now our generation honors them for what they did 50 years ago, knowing full well that the greatest honor we can give is to build for the future ourselves at home and abroad: revitalizing our economy so that our people can live to their fullest capacities; strengthening the fabric of our communities and our families; putting our children first and giving them the values they need to do well in a difficult world; making our Government work for all the people, for it took all the people to win the Second World War and to keep this country going forward.

In this uncertain world, we must also remain vigilant against new threats. Today American men and women in uniform stand sentry all around the globe, in Europe, in the Adriatic, in Korea, and on bases here at home. They are the finest, best trained, best motivated fighting force the world has ever known. And our highest commitment must be to ensure that they remain exactly that. If they must be sent in harm's way, we owe them the support they need and deserve.

On this day, we honor those who died for our country. But let us also hold a special place for all of our living American veterans. We owe them a lasting debt of gratitude, and their well-being must be always the cause of our common concern. And let us recognize again our solemn obligation to find answers for those whose loved ones served but were never accounted for.

A year ago today, just before I came to this hallowed place, I spoke at the Vietnam Memorial to honor those who died in that war. I was proud to be joined there by a remarkable man who became a friend of mine, Lewis Puller, Jr. This year, as virtually all of you must know, he rests here on this holy place. This morning when I got up I thought of Lew Puller and the countless heroes he has joined and the terrible sacrifices men and women had been willing to make for this great land.

Every one of them, no matter what war they served in or what battlefield they died on, every

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one helped to build a nation we love. Let us remember them. Let us pray for their souls and those of their families and resolve to carry on the never-finished work of freedom.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:33 a.m. at Arlington National Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to World War II veteran Elizabeth P. McIntosh and master of ceremonies Katy Daley.

Remarks at the Swearing-In Ceremony for Members of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

May 31, 1994

Thank you very much, Secretary Shalala and Mr. Vice President, Florence Griffith Joyner and Tom McMillen. Glad to see others here in the audience, our Surgeon General, Dr. Elders; Assistant Secretary of HHS Phil Lee; and so many others who are here.

Let me say that I was once asked if I wanted Al Gore to be Vice President because he could run faster than me, and then I would get my times down. [*Laughter*] That was not the primary reason that I asked him to join the ticket in 1992, but I did think it was important, and I do believe it is important that all of us exemplify by what we do a commitment to the work we are about to celebrate when we swear in the President's Council today.

Let me explain why I think this is important. This morning before I came out here, I had about 10 minutes, and I sat down and I made these little notes here, to try to see if I could get across to you and, perhaps through you, to the American people why this day is really a big deal to me.

Before I ran for President, I devoted a lot of time, very private time, to reflecting on the nature of public service, the nature of government, what the role of government in our life is, and what things government cannot do. And I thought a lot about what the American people have to do for themselves in order for this country to work right.

So consider the following: Our Government and our administration has worked hard here at home to get the economy up and going and the deficit down, to pass the most sweeping education and training legislation for workers and young people trying to compete in a global economy in 30 years, to expand trade more in 15 months than in the previous generation. Abroad, in the last couple of days, we have

celebrated something that's good for our health: for the first time since the dawn of the atomic age, the United States and Russia no longer have nuclear missiles pointed at each other.

An enormous amount of what we do involves the health of our people. In the area of the environment, we're working hard on a new clean air act and a safe drinking water act. In the area of crime, we passed an assault weapons ban and the Brady bill and more police officers and more prevention, more opportunities for our young people to stay out of trouble, in the area of strengthening the family, something that directly relates to the health of American families, the Family and Medical Leave Act, which permits families to take time off when their children or their parents are ill. Our FDA is taking on a pretty tough fight with the tobacco industry and now looking into the whole issue of the narcotic or addictive effects and whether they can be varied based on certain production techniques. In the area of health care, the First Lady and the Department of Health and Human Services and others have worked on immunization, on more primary and preventive care in our health care proposal, on trying to provide prescription medicines to elderly people.

Now, in the course of doing this, we've made quite a few enemies. We've made the NRA mad, the cigarette industry mad, certain business interests that don't agree with either the economic program or the environmental initiatives or other things, many of but not all of the health insurance companies, and some particularly extremist groups who disapprove even of what we've done to expand the frontiers of medical research. It has all been worth it. It is part of what we are supposed to do.

Now, having said all that, when I picked up the briefing for this event and I realized that